

NEWS RELEASE from *Peaceful Chiricahua Skies*

Contact: peacefulchiricahuaskies.com

520-369-3503

peacefulchiricahuaskies@gmail.com

Opposition grows to Air Force Flight Increase Over Southeast Arizona *Hundreds sign petitions, submit comments, attend scoping meeting*

Portal, AZ— The public reaction has been swift to the U.S. Air Force's (USAF) [call for scoping comments](#) on its latest plan to allow numerous military flights at 100 feet above ground level, and regular supersonic, sonic-boom-producing training flights at 5,000 feet over southeastern Arizona and southwestern New Mexico.

Despite the fact that the USAF published its [Notice of Intent](#) only 44 days before its EIS scoping comment deadline of March 4, and gave even a shorter time frame for the only public information meeting for the proposed Tombstone Military Operations Area (MOA), the response has been widespread. A website posted by a volunteer group in the Chiricahua Mountains, calling itself Peaceful Chiricahua Skies (PCS), has already received hundreds of signatures on its [petition in opposition](#) and attracted numerous endorsements ranging from local businesses and individuals to major conservation groups.

"It's been amazing to see the energy opposing this threat to our livelihoods, our personal well-being and our protected wildlands and wildlife," said Karen Fasimpaur, one of many volunteers working to elevate awareness of the proposal. She emphasized that the local effort, while centered around the Portal, Arizona/Rodeo, New Mexico area, represents a much larger landscape than that. According to refinements of generalized USAF maps, the boundaries around the Tombstone MOA portion of the proposal include much of eastern Cochise County plus the entire Bootheel of New Mexico, including Douglas, Bisbee, Portal, AZ, and Rodeo and Playas, NM.

"The Chiricahua and Peloncillo Mountains are some of North America's most cherished historical and biologically diverse lands, drawing researchers from all over the world. Our region's prehistoric, Native American and western histories, along with the peace and tranquility that we all came here to enjoy, make this proposal a threat to all our local traditions," said Reed Peters, President of Friends of Cave Creek Canyon, one of the organizations endorsing the campaign.

The only public meeting scheduled by the Air Force for the proposed Tombstone MOA, held in Animas, NM—a tiny, remote community more than one hundred miles from the Cochise County population centers affected by the new plan—nevertheless drew a surprising crowd of more than 100 people from the sparsely-populated area. **meeting photo**

"The Air Force has allowed only six weeks for public comment on a plan which is likely to devastate life in many of our rural communities," said Harold Farmer, a local resident helping with the effort. "We need more time, and the opportunity of more public meetings, for a responsible response to these dangerously far-reaching proposals."

According to Peaceful Chiricahua Skies, its website peacefulchiricahuaskies.com provides a wide range of background research, sample comment letters, petitions, contacts for elected representatives, and a [photo gallery for media use](#).